The Catholic Doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist

By

The Rev. Richard Pulger of New Jersey

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THE

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

OF THE

BLESSED EUCHARIST,

COMMONLY CALLED

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE COURT-HOUSE OF NEWTON, SUSSEX COUNTY, DECEMBER 2, 1821, AND NOW PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CATHOLICS OF THAT DISTRICT.

BY THE REV. RICHARD BULGER,

ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST OF NEW-JERSEY.

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CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

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BLESSED EUCHARIST.

" I speak as to wise men: judge ye yourselves what I say. The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" 1 Cor. x. 25, 26.

My Brethren,

The question which the apostle put to the Corinthians, in the words of my text, was of infinite importance, not only to them, but to all christians, since the time of Jesus Christ to the present moment, and will be so likewise to millions yet unborn. It is not a question to be passed over lightly, to be treated with indifference, or dismissed with neglect; for it is a question in which our faith is concerned, whose answer involves our dearest interests, temporal and eternal, and of which none but wise men are competent to judge. To you, then, as wise men, as persons instructed in matters of faith, I put the same question, and ask of you, in the language of the apostle, " The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" My brethren, reflect for a moment before you presume to answer; I speak as to wise men. Let your answer correspond with the idea I have formed of you. Your salvation is at stake. Let not passion betray, or prejudice mislead you. Take wisdom for your guide, and let her direct you in your determination. The highest proofs which we can exhibit of this inestimable qualification is an humble reliance on the words of our Saviour, and his inspired apostles. In the tangled labyrinth of theological discussions, they are the certain clue to lead us to the light of truth from

the darkness of error. They are the standing land-marks, fixed by the hand of Heaven, which prejudice cannot remove, or ignorance mistake. Pride or presumption alone can overlook them, and pertinacious obstinacy refuse their aid, or reject their direction. In the inquiry then we are about to make, let not presumption or obstinacy be the companions of our search; but rather let us, taking example from our Saviour, learn to distrust the pride of human reason, and commit ourselves to the guidance of faith and humility. Without the grace of the Almighty, vain shall be our efforts to discover truth, or escape error. Let us then endeavour to deserve this grace, by practising the lessons of humility which he has taught us. It is a virtue most amiable in his sight. It is the fairest ornament of the soul, which aspires to a resemblance with her God. It is to it his most sublime graces are bestowed; for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Depending then on the positive declaration of the Almighty, and inspired by this most exalted virtue, the surest sign of well-founded faith, to the question of the apostle, the chalice of benediction, &c. we shall answer in the simple language of truth and sincerity, without equivocation or reserve, it is, I believe, on the word of the Almighty, it is.

It is to establish this sublime truth, the stupendous mystery of faith, the following discourse shall be directed. Many of you, I presume, have seen the chalice blessed, and the bread broken. You have seen the priest of Jesus Christ, arrayed in the robes of his ministry, standing before the altar of the living God, and making that mysterious offering which was to be continued until the second coming of our Lord. But, my brethren, how vastly different are the impressions which the sight has made on different minds? While some, struck with awe and reverence, are irresistibly impelled to kneel with their companions, and breathe out the trembling accents of praise and adoration to the Divinity, there are others, on whom the surrounding objects produce quite the contrary effect. They go into a catholic church during the moments of this solemn sacrifice; they hear the priest speak in a language which they cannot understand, or in a tone too low to be heard generally; they see him make use of mysterious signs, which are beyond their comprehension; they see him dressed in robes, whose typical meaning they cannot discover; instead of applying for instruction to those who are qualified to give it, or enlightening their minds on a

subject which seems so dark and mysterious, they suffer their pride to mislead their better judgment, and take upon themselves to condemn what they do not understand. In vain do they behold around them hundreds prostrate, sending up their prayers in silent whispers to the throne of the Divinity; in vain do they see that air of modest reserve, or intense devotion, which mark the countenances and gestures of numbers. Their pride will not permit them to acknowledge their own ignorance, and their prejudice steps in to administer a half consolation to their wounded feeling, by treating the ornaments as fantastic, the ceremonies as unmeaning, and imputing the appearances of piety and devotion, to ignorance, superstition, or something worse. They do not reflect how impossible it would be for a man, and a man, generally speaking, little versed in the craft or windings of worldly policy; a man who pretends to no immediate inspiration; who claims no superior personal excellence, nor arrogates to himself any fancied virtue above the lowest of his flock; who boasts not of any extraordinary interviews with God or his angels; but who, on his approach to the altar, confesses himself a sinner in the sight of God and man, entirely unworthy of celebrating such mysteries, and begs the prayers of the people to the Almighty, for his forgiveness. They do not reflect how impossible it would be for such a person to mislead a whole audience, to bewilder them, as it is said, by the spells of priestcraft, and to lead blindfold through the mazes of ignorance, or the gloom of superstition, a people, many of whom are often more wise, more learned, and more intelligent than himself. Can the man who would look with indifference on the wealth of the world, or meet without emotion the thousand spears of the enemy, be so captivated with the embroidery of a vestment, or the stated wavings of the hand, as to give up his reason and his judgment to the impressions of his senses? Can the man who has exhausted, by his study, the deep-laid treasures of ancient lore, be so infatuated by the words of a language, which he well understands in the mouth of a priest, as to yield himself the dupe of unmeaning ceremony, and fall the victim of superstition? Can the sound of the Latin tongue so spell-bind the reason and senses of the multitude, as to confine them to their knees in silent devotion, to draw tears from their eyes of unfeigned sorrow, and to melt the heart in transports of ecstacy, gratitude, and love? The person who could attribute these effects to such

inadequate causes, seems more justly liable to the charge of superstition, than they to whom he imputes it. Has the God of nature moulded the organs of Catholics so different from their accusers, as that the objects which excite in the one only feelings of unsatisfied curiosity, or the scoffs of affected pity, should melt the other in transports of tenderness and devotion? No, my brethren, it is idle to assign such effects to mere unanimated ceremony, or to sounds of whose meaning they are ignorant. They must be the result of some nobler cause; they must be the effect of some more elevated principle: it is because the chalice of benediction which we bless, is the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break, is the partaking of his body.

My brethren, for the instruction of my present audience, and from a sincere regard for their eternal felicity, I shall proceed to the elucidation of this sublime truth. Your views in attending, are, I hope, similar to mine in addressing you. I should be sorry to introduce such a subject, for the sake of gratifying an idle curiosity, or of amusing by a number of words, connected and arranged together, the vacant hour of the indolent, or the silly eagerness of the trifler. No, my brethren, could I suppose your attendance induced by such motives, I would persist in sorrowful silence; for I would never presume to debase the gospel of Jesus Christ to such unworthy ends, much less this awful mystery, of which the apostle himself would not speak but to wise men. Of you I entertain better hopes, that you come forward fully persuaded of the vast importance of the matters to be discussed. That it is not to gratify the curiosity, to delight the imagination, to amuse the fancy, or find matter of praise or blame for the critic or the scholar; but to discover truth, and that a truth, not like some others, for whose knowledge or ignorance we shall not be questioned at the awful tribunal of the Almighty; but a truth which Jesus Christ himself has published to the world, and on the right understanding and belief of which he has made our eternal happiness to depend; for he says, *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.* John, vi. 54. Such is the importance of the subject of which we are about to treat; a subject which should never be introduced but with reverence and respect, and which I would not attempt to discuss, but for your salvation. Yes, my brethren, I feel alarmed at the consciousness of my own weakness, I tremble at the idea of

presuming to speak on so sublime, on so stupendous a mystery; for if it is only wise men that should hear, who is he that should presume to make it the subject of his discourse? Here is where the sense of human weakness almost overwhelms me, nor should I ever dare to handle such a subject, but that the concern for your salvation, and the ministry with which I am charged, compel me to undertake it.

My brethren, I propose to you a great mystery, a mystery which demands a strong return of faith, a mystery so sublime in its nature, and so much above the comprehension of human reason, that our Lord Jesus Christ, whose works and words should have stamped on him, in the eyes of the Jews, the character of infallibility, thought fit, before he proposed it to the people, to qualify it with this introduction: *He that believeth in me hath life everlasting.* John, vi. 47. It is this, that the chalice of benediction which we bless, is the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break, which you see elevated by the priest, which you behold distributed to the faithful, is the partaking of his body. In other words, that in the most adorable sacrament of the blessed eucharist, is really, truly, and substantially present, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, enlivened by his spirit. This is truly a stupendous mystery; but, my brethren, let not your reason be shocked at the proposition, but listen for a moment to the divine, infallible, incontrovertible authority on which it is founded. It is a mystery of faith; do not suffer your senses to mislead your judgment. Objects of faith are entirely beyond their province; for faith is the conviction of things unseen. Remember, the Almighty has promised eternal life, as the reward of faith; and if objects of faith were illumined by the brightness of evidence, what merit would there be in our assent or conviction? No; our belief in such matters must be founded on the infallible word of the Almighty, not on the testimony of the senses, or the reasoning of the intellect. Our inquiry should be, not whether such a thing is possible, but whether our Lord has declared it; for, being once convinced of his declaration to call the possibility thereof in question, is to act like the unbelieving Jew, saying, *How can this man give us his flesh to eat?* John, vi. 53. It is in reality to deny the omnipotence, and therefore the divinity of Jesus Christ. It is to throw ourselves into the hopeless gulf of deism, to leave ourselves without a Saviour, a

Christ, a Redeemer, and to depend only on our own strength, to scale the height of bliss and Heaven, to human forces inaccessible.

My brethren, in a mystery so clearly sublime and incomprehensible, we should be as explicit as possible; for there is obscurity enough in the subject itself, without deepening it by phrases or expressions little understood, or equivocal in their meaning. For this reason I shall endeavour to render myself as intelligible as possible, and to obviate any erroneous idea which might be attached to my words. I propose to you the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour, under the appearance of our corporeal food. But I know that many start at the idea of receiving the person of their Lord into their bodies, and feeding upon it, as mere human nourishment. But, my brethren, I would wish to correct this notion, which is both erroneous in itself, repugnant to our ideas of decency, and very adverse to ready and implicit faith, which would follow a just apprehension of this divine mystery. The faith of the Catholic church then simply implies, that by the act of communion, we are spiritually united to Jesus Christ; that under the signs of bread and wine, he enters into us, and we into him; that this union produces the same spiritual effect on the soul, that material food does on the body. It is not a breaking of parts, or a corporeal digestion, but the union of two spiritual substances, which cannot be changed, and which, to use an imperfect comparison, like salt and water become as one. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.* John, vi. 57.

Such, my brethren, is the article I propose to your belief. Listen, I beseech, without impatience or prejudice, to the authority on which it is founded. Were it first proposed by man, we surely had never believed him. It rests on the word of the Almighty himself. Let us follow him to that awful scene, the last supper, where he not only delivered the chalice of benediction to his disciples, but likewise gave them the power, and imposed it on them as a duty to deliver it to others. *And on the first day of the azymes, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the pasch? But Jesus said, Go ye into the city, to a certain man, and say to him, the master saith, my time is near at hand. I will keep the pasch at thy house, with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them, and they prepared the pasch. Now, when it was evening, he sat down with his twelve disciples, and whilst they were at*

supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said, Take ye and eat, this is my body, and taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, drink you all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. Matt. xxvi. Behold here, my brethren, behold the words of the Almighty. He took bread, blest it, broke it, and said, this is my body. And shall any mortal have the presumption to call his words in question? Christ, the Omnipotent, the God of heaven; he who said, and it was done; he who commanded, and all things were created, he has said, "this is my body." Shall presumptuous man say it *is not*? My brethren, if we listen to the words of our Saviour, if we abide by his declaration, if we turn our eyes from that false glare, which pride would hold up to our view, and follow with humility the pure and steady light of faith, which the Almighty has lent us, we cannot hesitate for a moment, we cannot be mistaken in our course, so long as we take the word of God as our guide; for its light shall dispel every shade of darkness which might bewilder us. But man, not abiding by the words of Jesus Christ, would call in question the intention of the Almighty, and assert that the meaning of the Lord was the very contrary of what he expressed; that when he said, "this is my body," he meant this is not my body, it is only the figure of my body. No change, no alteration has taken place; it is still only bread, not *living bread*, but mere unanimated, material bread, such as the earth every day produces. Such an opinion leaves the words of the Most High without a meaning; but for your satisfaction, edification, and, I hope, future sanctity, I shall follow them in their arguments, or rather impious ravings. Here one of those persons come forward with formal air of affected commisseration, in which triumph is more visible than pity. Hear him gravely tell his audience, that catholics, or if he thinks proper, papists, believe that bread and wine are the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Hear him expatiate on the absurdity of such a belief, and display his profound erudition, by a show of argument which his audience are often little able to examine. The scripture, says he, is to be taken in its literal sense, except when some impiety or absurdity would follow. Now this is the case in the word of Christ; for how can we believe him when we hear him say that bread is his body? If a man tells me he is dumb, whatever stretch of faith I may pos-

sess, I cannot believe him; for the act contradicts the assertion. The same absurdity would follow, were we to suppose that Christ spoke literally when he said, *This bread is my body;* it involves in itself a metaphysical absurdity, and therefore we must conclude he spoke figuratively. Such is the argument made use of to invalidate the plain words of Jesus Christ, and this is followed by a long, unmeaning harangue, in which the passions or prejudice of the audience, rather than their reason, is addressed. Some well-turned compliments, respecting their own superior judgment, and the wisdom of the preachers, are thrown in, and the conclusion wound up by expatiating on the blind and stupid ignorance and gross idolatry of catholics, who could take a bit of bread for their God, with many other strokes of sarcasm, more adapted to the stage of a strolling buffoon than the gravity of the pulpit, or the awful solemnity of such a subject.

Now, my brethren, in order to detect the fallacy of such a sophism, and to discover the deadly poison which it conceals, it is sufficient to remark, that the whole question at issue, the whole point of dispute, the matter which should first have been clearly established, that this, without regard to reasoning or decency, is assumed as granted. For the fact to be investigated and proved, is, whether the substance which our Lord held in his hand, and over which he pronounced the words of consecration, whether that substance, according to the plain sense of his words, became his body; or whether, contrary to their meaning, and to any meaning that can be annexed to them, it still continued the same as before, without change or alteration. The latter opinion, so entirely inconsistent with any possible sense that can be affixed to the words of our Lord, and without even an attempt to prove it, they assume as granted; and having laid it down as the base of their subsequent structure, they are enabled to raise that mass of absurdities with which they endeavour to overwhelm the faith of the catholic. They unite in the same piece their own incredulity with catholic faith, and from these materials draw that picture of hideous incongruities which scares the imaginations of their audience. But let us see by what extraordinary gift of vision they can discover a metaphysical impossibility, in the plain and literal sense of the words of Jesus Christ. How has it escaped the observation of the multitudes who preceded them? Is it that some new light is shed upon the world,

which enables them to discover what had passed unnoticed for ages, or is this fabled impossibility the offspring of wilful blindness, to which perversion has given countenance, and impudence charged on the words of our Redeemer? Yes, my brethren, with confidence I assert it, that if there exists the shadow of an impossibility, it arises from a most glaring perversion of the words of our Redeemer. Do those persons imagine there is no guilt in perverting the words of our Lord, and putting into the mouth of Omnipotence a language which they themselves consider as absurd and impossible? Do they suppose that such freedom with the words of the Almighty is any thing short of downright blasphemy? Christ, my brethren, never said, this bread is my body; nor are catholics taught to believe that bread and wine are his body and blood. No; the two substances are infinitely distant; nor are catholics so absurd as to unite them. Christ did not say, "this bread is my body;" a sentence which our modern sophists put into his mouth, that they might afterwards charge on him absurdities of their own fabrication. He took bread, blest, broke, and said, take ye and eat, this is my body. τϛτο εϛτι το σωμα μϛ. Where is then the impossibility imputed to the literal words of our Saviour? Where is the pretended absurdity, imputed to the belief of the catholic? Where is the necessity of a figure, which they are called in to support it? It is no where to be found; but the impiety of our traducers is visible, in perverting the words of our Redeemer, and in making a sentence the most awfully sublime and important that ever fell from the lips of Omnipotence, according to their own assertion, rank nonsense and absurdity. The very word τϛτο (this) can never be made to agree with bread, unless we suppose Christ ignorant of the construction of language. But if even any doubt remained, the adjunct of the second proposition would be sufficient to silence it, and to fix our faith on a foundation which is immovable. *This is my blood of the New Testament, shed for many for the remission of sins.* The Old Testament was consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats; this, says Moses, is the blood of the Testament. But this, says Jesus Christ, is my blood of the New Testament. What blood? Figurative blood? No; blood shed for the remission of sins. Real blood; the same by which the sins of the world were cancelled. Was it not by the real blood of Jesus Christ the sins of mankind were remitted? Did not Christ say, this is my blood, shed for the

remission of sins? Mortal, shall you say it was blood, only by a figure? Then was it by figurative, not by real blood, man's redemption was accomplished. But it may be said, was it not bread when Christ took it in his hand? Was it not bread when Christ began to speak? Did not then Christ call bread his body? My brethren, I would entreat you to be on your guard on this subject, and suffer not your imaginations to hurry you into error, by annexing to the words of the Almighty the same power which you would to human language, or by judging alike of their effects. The language which belongs to the Divinity would little suit weak mortals; and we inevitably fall into error, when we bring to its examination conceptions formed previously on our own. Look to the creation of the world, and then judge of the language of Omnipotence. When the Almighty said, Let light be, what was? Light was. Before he spoke, it was darkness; when he began, it was darkness; but when he ended, it was light. Let light be, and light was. This is the language of a God; let earth be, and earth was; let the firmament be, and the firmament was. The same Being said, This is my body; and by the same power, it was his body. He who called all things out of nothing, could with equal ease change one substance into another; or, to answer you in the words of St. Ambrose, the illustrious Bishop of Milan, the cotemporary of St. Augustin, whom he converted by his eloquence: "but, this bread, it is bread before the words of the sacrament. When the consecration takes place, from bread it becomes the body of Christ. This then let us establish. How that which is bread can become the body of Christ? By consecration. In what words, or in whose language is the consecration effected? In that of Jesus Christ. For all other words which are said, offer up praise to God. Prayer is made previously for the people, for the king, and for others. But when come to that period in which this venerable sacrament is to be consecrated, then the priest uses not his own words, but the words of Christ. Therefore the words of Christ effect the sacrament. What word of Christ? That indeed by which all things were made. The Lord commanded, and the heavens were made; the Lord commanded, and the earth was made; the Lord commanded, and the seas were made; the Lord commanded, and all things were created. See, therefore, how efficacious is the word of Christ. If then there is such power in the word of Jesus Christ, as that those things which

had not existed, should exist, how much more to change things existing, into something else. But hear him saying, he said, and it was done; he commanded, and all things were created. Therefore, that I may answer you, it was not the body of Christ before consecration, but after consecration, I tell you, that it is now the body of Christ. He said, and it was done; he commanded, and it was created. (Lib. iv. cap. 4. de sacr.) Such, my brethren, is the language of St. Ambrose, on this subject, which I give you, not that you should build your faith on the words of Ambrose, or any one, except Christ, but because they explain this subject more clearly than I myself could have done; and that you might, at the same time, learn what was the faith of the primitive christians, a consideration which should always influence us. How vain then are their efforts, who endeavour to introduce a figure into the plain meaning of our Lord, and that by a mode of proceeding which, by their own avowal, puts nonsense in the mouth of the Almighty; as if the Almighty had said, this bread is my body, or this is the figure of my body. When Christ said, I am the vine, I am the door, it is plain to every understanding, that the sense was metaphorical; for no one could apply the epithet, vine, or door, to him literally; but when he took bread, blest it, broke it, and said, this is my body; when he took the chalice and spoke the word of consecration, this is my blood of the New Testament, shed for the remission of sins, there is no necessity, no place, no possibility of figure, unless we conclude, with the Nicolaites, that it was only fantastic or imaginary blood, that was shed on the cross for mankind.

But, my brethren, without descending to this minute investigation of words or sentences, or entangling ourselves unnecessarily in the windings of sophisms, which incredulity has contrived, a bare review of the circumstances would be sufficient to convince us how improbable it is that our Lord should use a figure on that occasion. Let us only place before our eyes the awful and melting scene of the last supper. Let us view our Redeemer, seated in the midst of his disciples. Let us hear him addressing them in the most endearing manner, and telling them it was the last time he should eat or drink with them, until it was fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Let us represent to ourselves our Lord, on the eve of his death, delivering his testament to his beloved disciples, constituting them the repository of this precious treasure, and the ministers thereof, to the

future faithful, and then ask ourselves, is it possible that he could use figurative or equivocal language on such a solemn occasion? Could he say to his disciples? You are no longer slaves, You are friends, You know the will of your Master, you are the repository of my secrets. To you I have explained in private, what I spoke publicly by figures. My hour is now come; this is the last night I shall spend with you, till my mortal course be finished. Yet this, the last, the most awful the most important, contrary to my former custom with you, shall be clouded in figure, and that with regard to the object which I came from heaven to accomplish, which I came to bequeath mankind, and on which depends the salvation of millions. Oh, my brethren, is it on such an occasion, on the eve of his death, with his own disciples, and on the subject of his testament, is it here our Lord would use figures? or would such conduct be consistent with his love, his mercy, his justice.

But there is one circumstance which deserves particular attention. Listen, my brethren, for if a shade of doubt remains upon your minds, it cannot but dispel it. It is a circumstance which throws such a light over the whole subject, as must brighten the eye of faith with the triumphant smile of conviction, and display the hideous figure of incredulity in its darkest colours. It is the time, the occasion, in which our Lord and his disciples were assembled. It was to celebrate the pasch, the feast of the unleavened bread. The pasch, the great festival of the Jews, instituted by the command of the Almighty, on the eve of their departure from the tyranny of Pharaoh, and the land of bondage. The blood of the Lamb was sprinkled on their doors, which preserved them from the arm of the destroying angel. They were to eat of the pasch, with unleavened bread, with staves in their hands, and their loins girt in the attitude of persons equipped for a journey. They were to set out for the land of promise; but they had still seas to cross, and deserts to traverse, before they arrived at the place of their destination. All was done to them in figure. But our Lord came to fulfil those figures, to abolish the types, and substitute the reality. He came to free us, not from the yoke of a temporal tyrant, but from the yoke of sin and Satan. He came to deliver us, not from the darkness of Egypt, but from the night of infidelity, and the darkness of destruction. The blood of this Lamb, the Lamb without spot, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world,

saved us from the vengeance of the Almighty: and the same immaculate Lamb, eaten with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, gives us strength to perform our journey through the desert of human life, to the glorious land of promise, which is heaven itself. It was to effect this merciful purpose, that our Lord this night sat down with his disciples. He came, not to substitute one figure for another, but to fulfil the type of the Jew, in the reality of the Christian. Here is where the new law, the law of love, of truth of Christ, infinitely surpasses the figures of the Jews. As far as the blood of Jesus Christ exceeds in value the blood of bulls or goats, or God is above his creatures. They had a created being; we have the Creator of all beings. They had a lamb of the earth; we have the Lamb of God. A mute, irrational animal was sacrificed as their pasch; but *our pasch, Christ, is immolated.* 2 Cor. v. 7. Oh, why will men be so blind as to throw themselves back into the feeble figures of the Jews, and reject the reality which Christ has brought with him. As if our Lord still continued the figures, which he came expressly to fulfil, or substituted a less perfect sign for one far more striking. Can we imagine that the mission of our Lord tended to nothing more noble, or the Jew and the Christian, are they still on a level, as either possesses nothing but the figure? If not, my brethren, what have we to do but give up the untenable opinion of inefficient figures; to enjoy the reality with him who came to substitute truth for types; to give full and entire faith to the words of our Lord, who, fulfilling the Jewish pasch, took bread, blest, broke, and said, take ye and eat, this is my body; to believe, to confess, and cry out with the apostle, *our pasch, Christ, is immolated?*

My brethren, when we place before our eyes such a mass of evidence, bearing directly on the same point, and proving not only the inutility, but even the impossibility of annexing a figurative meaning to the words of our Lord, we cannot sufficiently conceive what could ever induce men to reject the plain, literal, and only possible sense of this sentence of the Almighty. For whether we examine the words themselves, in which this mysterious offering was made, *this is my body, given for you: this is my blood of the New Testament, shed for the remission of sins,* or the time on which it was spoken, the awful hour before his passion, or the persons to whom it was addressed, his beloved disciples, or, finally, the occa-

sion of their assembling to celebrate and fulfil the typical pasch of the Jews; whether we consider any one, or all these circumstances united, we must be convinced, that nothing was farther from the intention of our Redeemer, than to annex a figurative meaning to his language; that he did not intend to amuse or mislead us by doubtful expressions, or that when he said to his disciples, with such awful solemnity, this is my body, they should take it in the very opposite sense, and believe it was not his body.

I have dwelt upon these things longer, perhaps than was necessary; for to any person who is sincerely disposed to seek and embrace the truth, any one proof would be sufficient. He would rest simply on the words of the Almighty, restrain any idle and impertinent curiosity, nor ever suffer his imagination to take the place of his reason, in order to call up the phantom of a figure, which, in whatever shape it is viewed, presents nothing but absurd inconsistencies. But, my brethren, I have been led to such a length on this subject chiefly, because it is here our opponents place their strong hold of defence, or rather their gloom of obscurity, in which their figures may wander with the greatest convenience, assume a multitude of changing shapes, to elude search of reason, and escape the heavenly light of truth, which would quickly terminate their existence. But there is another objection, which arises, not so much from reason as from the senses, and which is always found to have great weight with those who are guided, rather by their carnal sense, than by the light of faith; who reduce the word of our Lord to a level with their earthly comprehensions, and attempt to weigh the most sublime mystery of our faith, in the narrow scale of human understanding. Those who publicly preach the opinion of figures, seem well aware of this circumstance, and seldom fail to avail themselves of it, in order to lay hold on the imaginations of their audience, and thereby turn the eye of the mind from the fixed land-mark, which should guide it to a false and flitting light, which quickly leads them into error. They abandon the infallible and unerring words of Jesus Christ, and commit themselves to the feeble glimmer of philosophy. How, say they, can it be the body of Christ? Did not his body surround him? how then could his disciples receive it? Is not his body present at the right hand of God in heaven? How then can he be present on your altars, not only here, but in Rome, in Japan, in China, at the farthest ends of

the earth? Do not our senses tell us, that body and place bear such a relation to one another, that the same body cannot occupy more than the exact space with which it coincides? How is it possible then, that it could occupy numberless spaces, or be multiplied as it were to infinity?

My brethren, such objections are surely unworthy of christian, of him who believes in the infinite power and veracity of his Redeemer. Our Lord, to exercise our faith, proposes to us a matter beyond the sphere of our senses, contrary to the laws of nature, and infinitely above our comprehension. He proposes to us a most stupendous miracle; and yet man wishes to reduce it to the testimony of his senses, to examine it by the feeble light of his own understanding, and tofind a solution thereof in the laws of the physical world, when it is contrary to their order, and seen only by the light of faith, directed by humility. How unworthy is it of a christian, in such a case to enter upón the ground of philosophy; to require his opponent to follow him in all his windings, and to demand a solution of all his difficulties, in a matter above the comprehension of all mankind. Should he not be satisfied with this single answer?—The Almighty has said it, and that is sufficient. The physical laws of the creation were established by his will; they are still subject to his power, and he can suspend them at pleasure. Why will you, Oh, man, be so presumptious as to call his words in question, to make your reason the standard of Omnipotence, or to say, I cannot understand it, therefore it is impossible? Are you so well acquainted with the nature of bodies, that none of their properties should have escaped you? Can you understand how the earth moves, the rain falls, or the tender blade of grass rises verdant, on the surface of the meadow? The sun, the stars, the heavenly bodies, you are not able to account for. Every single plant, which grows upon the earth, defies your keenest investigation, in every stage of its existence, from the moment of its growth to its final decay. Your own body is to you an incomprehensible mystery. Your immortal soul is still more so; how it is united to a portion of matter; how it depends upon this matter for most of its ideas, essences purely spiritual, and how this matter, or body, obeys its commands, so as sometimes to rush forwards at its impulse to certain destruction; all these things, every act of nature is to you a mystery, and yet

you pretend to decide upon the properties of bodies, and what is still more presumptuous, on the glorified body of Jesus Christ.

Surely, my brethren, such an answer, which displays to man his own weakness in so striking a manner, should be sufficient to overwhelm him with confusion, in attempting to fathom the works of the Almighty. But even here itself our Lord has given a direct answer. He has left us a parable in his works, sufficient to silence the cavils of philosophy, and to put incredulity to the blush, at its presumption and arrogance. It is found recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, where our Lord performed a miracle, which shows how matter and space bend to his almighty power, and own him their Lord and Master. And what is still more striking, this miracle was performed shortly before the pasch, the festival in which he intended to make that mysterious offering which we are discussing: that the memory of this late and extraordinary miracle, being fresh upon the minds of his disciples, they should be the less inclined to doubt his word, or question his power, when their faith was to be subsequently exercised by a similar effect of his Omnipotence. *Now*, says the evangelist, *the pasch, the festival of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus therefore had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip, whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to try him; for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him, there is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place, so the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples, gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above to them that had eaten.* John, vi.

Behold here, my brethren, behold here an instance of the power of the Lord over the bodies he had created; behold the loaves multiplying under his sacred hands to any desired number. Can we, af-

ter reading such a miracle, inquire how Christ could be personally present in heaven, on our altars, or in any other point of space? Let us examine the matter more closely; let us aid our reason by the help of the imagination, that we may see more clearly the operations of the Divinity on this subject. Let us suppose the five thousand men divided into one hundred companies of fifty each. Let us allow only five loaves to each company, or one to every ten persons. Let us make even this gross arrangement in our imagination, and we shall see that the Almighty either created new loaves, or he multiplied the original ones one hundred times. Did he create new loaves? If so, then he fed the multitude, not with five, but five hundred. But here again the words of the evangelist comes in to direct us. *They gather them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five loaves.* Not any new loaves, but of the same original five: the same our Lord took into his hand, and distributed amongst those that were set down. Man, after such an example, wilt thou prove incredulous, or question the power of the Divinity? Wilt thou not see how that the Almighty has absolute power over every object in the universe; that, to use a sensible example, he could multiply one brick so as to make a tower, or build the rib of Adam into a full grown woman?

But, my brethren, let us pursue this chapter further; it shall throw a light on the subject, before which those figures of error shall fade, as the phantoms of night before the beams of the morning. Never did our Lord work a miracle to make an ostentatious display of his power. He had a more noble object in view, either to confirm the faith of his followers, or to instruct them by these testimonies of his omnipotence, to submit their reason to his words, and believe in his doctrine. What use does he make of the late miracle? To propose to the Jews the same mystery which I now propose to your belief. After the miraculous multiplication of the loaves, they meet him, no doubt, by the hidden dispensations of his providence. And then, having testified the divinity of the Son of Man, corrected their ideas of the manna of the desert, which was only the figure of the true bread from heaven, having enlarged on the sublime virtue of faith, and shown it was the peculiar gift of the Almighty, he proposes the awful mystery of his body and blood in the adorable sacrament of the eucharist. *Amen, Amen*, said he, *He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life. I am*

the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, say how can this man give us his flesh to eat. Oh, man of incredulity! dost thou not recognize thy objection here in the mouth of the Jew. Oh, faithless christian! Wilt thou act even worse than the Jew? Wilt thou ask, how can this man, God, give us his flesh to eat? If they were inexcusable, how much more art thou, who acknowledgest his divinity, yet dost question his power? Did they believe him to be God, would they ever have asked, how can this man give us his flesh to eat?

But hear the answer to their doubts from the mouth of Omnipotence, and receive it as a solution for your own. *Then Jesus said* to them: *Amen, amen I say unto you except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath life everlasting, and I will raise him up in the last day.* Can words, can language be more explicit? What can you require more, oh, man! to direct you in your faith? Put yourself in the situation of the Jews, and ask yourself could the Almighty himself give a more direct or more expressive answer to your murmurings. Ask yourself would the Almighty suffer you to remain in suspense for a moment, if he only meant to present to you a figure, and that figure nothing more than mere natural bread. Would he multiply difficulties unnecessarily, or throw an obstacle in the way of your salvation by suffering you to remain in ignorance of his intention. Would he not have said it is only natural bread I shall give which you must receive as the figure of my body. Would he have said so emphatically and confirmed it by an oath, *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you shall not have life in you.* But if such a declaration cannot satisfy you, proceed one step farther and give up your figures altogether or deny the divinity of the Son of God. Hear his words and be confounded at your slowness of belief. Hear his words rescinding for ever the possibility of a figure. Hear his word and adore the God of heaven really present in the Eucharist. For he it is that says, *My flesh is meat truly, My blood is drink truly.*

Presumptuous and unbelieving man say *figuratively*, Jesus Christ the God of truth says *truly*, the terms are contradictory, and whom shall we believe. Where is now the mortal that shall presume to call this doctrine Idolatrous, will he dare to come forward and contend not against the arguments or eloquence of man, but against the voice of God himself; will he presume to maintain his figures against the express word of Christ himself, *My flesh is meat truly*. It is the voice of God, 'tis the word of Omnipotence, 'tis the bolt of might, wielded by the arm of the Almighty, to tumble into ruins the aerial structure of tropes and figures raised by the imagination on the basis of infidelity. It is the flash from heaven, rending the dark clouds of error, and displaying to the eye of faith a perspective view of the Divinity himself. It is the voice of the Lord whose force is irresistible, and why will man oppose to be cherished by its power. Vox Domini super aquas, Deus majestatus intonuit. *Vox Domini in Virtute. Vox Domini in magnificentia. Vox Domini confringentis Cedros, et confringet Dominus Cedros Libani.*

If men at this moment were to contend before you on the words of our Lord, *this is my body*. If in their discussion they were to maintain opposite parts, one, the type, the figure, and the other the truth, the reality. If human art and fine drawn sophisms had so perplexed your judgment that you were at a loss which side to take; would not every anxiety cease? would not every shadow of doubt be dispelled? would not full confidence and conviction take possession of your mind, had you heard the Almighty himself cry out from heaven *my flesh is meat truly, my blood is drink truly*. Behold, my brethren, he does so, he has given a solution for your doubts. He has given you a motive of confidence which can never prove illusory. Has given a foundation for your faith which all the power of earth or hell cannot weaken. He has given you his word in the loudness of thunder, whose sound has gone forth to the extremity of the earth. He has given all you could wish, all you could require, more than you could hope for. For He says in positive express words, *My flesh is meat truly, my blood is drink truly*.

Oh! my Brethren, can you doubt after this express declaration of the Almighty? No, you do not, you cannot, it is impossible, the man who would doubt after such motives of conviction, would be more incredulous than the Jew himself, the very sight, the personal bearing of the Almighty himself, would

have no effect upon him. His mind is the abode of incredulity where faith can never fix her dwelling—it is the very dominion of darkness, impervious to the beams of heavenly light. No ray can enter there to enliven the darkness of his soul, or chase from their wonted haunts the phantoms of error and infidelity.

But, my Brethren, if the word of the Almighty has convinced you, let the wonderful effects which follow from a worthy participation of this heavenly food, enkindle in your breasts an earnest desire of that blessing. Our Lord goes on to enumerate them in a style which must strike us with admiration. *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, says he, abideth in me and I in him. As the living Father sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead, he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.*

My Brethren behold here how wonderful, behold here how strict the union between Jesus Christ and the worthy communicant. *As the living Father sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me.* Well might our Lord say, I am the vine and you are the branches, supported, cherished, and enlivened by the very essence of the stock into which you are ingrafted. He gives us himself; not the carnal food of our bodies, but the spiritual food of our souls; that food which imparts life, and strength, and spirit; for his words are *spirit and life*, not mere unanimated matter. Shall those persons who maintain the opinion of figures, shall they pretend that such miraculous effects will follow from eating what they deliver? Will they say that the bread in their hands is *living bread that came down from heaven*, or that it contains in itself a single principle of life or existence beyond what is merely corporeal? Shall they affirm that their inanimated mass is spirit and life? Or where is the spirit that quickeneth. When the Almighty says, *except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood you shall not have life in you*, can they enable you to fulfil this condition on which your salvation depends? Yes, they bid you eat *by faith;* a term inserted by man in the words of the Almighty; a term which carries the grossest absurdity on its face, when we compare it with their belief. They give you bread, mere unanimated corporeal bread. They give you the natural production of the earth, not *living bread that came down from heaven.* I do not misrepresent their opinion, it is their positive acknowledgement. There is, as they confess, no

change in the element, no transmutation of substance, no alteration beneath their hands; and this they bid you receive as the living flesh of Christ, as the flesh quickened by the spirit. This is eating by faith; what they are not able to effect by any delegated power they will have your imaginations supply, and shade with the veil of the divinity a mere corporeal substance. Is it possible that men gifted with the light of reason could ever become the victims of such an illusion. That men in other respects sensible, acute, discerning, with talents able to throw a light on any subject to which they were applied, should be so infatuated in a matter of such infinite importance. Put the question to your own hearts and ask yourselves, shall you be content to receive from the hands of any individual a mere inanimated mass, as living bread which came down from heaven? Will you be satisfied in receiving it, with having fulfilled the conditions to which your eternal salvation is annexed? *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood you shall not have life in you.* My brethren, it is a question not to be treated with indifference or passed over slightly; it is a question in which your dearest interests are concerned, a question in which your life, your soul, your eternal happiness is at stake. Never since the moment of your existence was a matter of greater magnitude proposed to your consideration; and shall you treat it with neglect? Shall you refuse the labour of a decision and say, we shall hear you again on these matters? If you do my brethren, I tell you you are undone; for where the light of faith is once shut out, it seldom again deigns to revisit.

By brethren let no man take offence at my words, the Lord above knows I do not intend to give any. But where a matter of such importance is at stake, can I bear to be silent or slur over the truth lest I should offend a mortal? No, my Brethren, my own salvation as well as yours is here concerned. I am bound to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ at every hazard, and woe to me should I refuse to do it. I have not burst the dearest ties which can bind man in this mortal life, and travelled such a distance to compromise the truth through motives of human considerations. I may be branded with the character of illiberality, but in that I am little concerned. I do not judge you, I speak to you as wise men, judge ye yourselves of what I say. I have placed the Catholic doctrine before

you; I have shown you the basis on which it rests; judge yourselves of their merits, but remember your salvation is concerned in your decision. There is no room here for self-sufficient latitudinarianism to step in, in order to reconcile the contending parties by taking away the ground of their dispute. That ground has been fixed by the hand of the Almighty himself, and the line of truth and rectitude which pervades it is immoveable. On that we must tread with firm, undeviating footsteps, for if we turn to the right or to the left destruction like a pitfall awaits us. In an affair then of such importance, what can be more absurd or disgusting than the charge of illiberality or bigotry; as if man had it in his power to bend truth, in order to fashion it to his neighbour's opinion. No, faith like truth is one and immutable, and he who for the sake of human friendship or worldly interest would temporize or conceal it, should justly be detested by man as well as his Maker. The arrogant or impertinent may call him illiberal or bigoted; but he should disregard their taunts or censures: for they might with equal propriety be passed on Christ himself, when he said, *except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood you shall not have life in you.* The minister only repeats the words of his Master; words which he can neither conceal or pervert unless at the loss of his eternal happiness.

Why then should any be offended? Why should you make party with any man or any opinion? Your view should be solely directed to the discovery of truth wherever it may be found, and your hearts resolved to embrace it. Think on the awful hour of judgment, shall it be set down to you as a meritorious act, that your hearts have swelled with desire to defend any particular preacher, when his system or opinions were attacked? If a personal insult had been offered, charity, justice, common politeness, should prompt you to stand between him and the aggressor, and shield his person or character from the weapons of calumny or assault. But will you risk your salvation to support his opinion? With a clear heart I can call the Almighty to witness that I am not an enemy to any individual, of any denomination. That in the affairs of life, in matters of kindness, friendship or benevolence, I would have gone as far as the most plausible liberality could desire. But in the important affair of religion, in that which is paramount to every other

duty, in that in which my own salvation and that of my audience is at stake, here I cannot compromise for a moment; I cannot abate a tittle; I cannot sacrifice the smallest portion to the friendship or affection of all the men upon earth, or make so mad a choice as to give up the heartfelt approbation of a good conscience, for the vain and fleeting applause of men or their teachers. Oh! would they but know the truth, would they but learn the divine virtue of humility and know themselves, would they but be convinced of their own insufficiency, and acknowledge their incapacity to discharge the sacred office they have undertaken. Is a competence in this world of such value, or so difficult to be procured, that in order to gain it they must institute as it were, a traffic on the souls of their neighbours. Those souls which Jesus Christ purchased with his blood, are they of so little value as to be entrusted to the charge of persons, who have got no more commission to feed them than their own assertion was able to stamp, or the license of another whose title is as invalid as their own. Who gave them power to break to the followers of Jesus Christ the sacred bread of life which our Lord promised to the faithful? *The bread that I shall give is my flesh that I shall give for the life of the world.* Who has dignified them with the sacred chharacter of Priest of the New Law, or who has said to them in the language of authority, *Do this in the commemortion of me.* Alas my brethren they do not pretend to it, they cannot pretend to it. The Catholic priest alone that can say, that dares to say, *I have received from the Lord that which also I deliver to you, whereas the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread and gave thanks, broke and said, take you and eat, this is my body which shall be delivered for you; do this for the commemoration of me. In like manner also the Chalice after he had supped, saying, this Chalice is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye as often as ye shall drink it in commemoration of me; For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink this Chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord until he come.* (1 Cor. xi. 27. et seq.) Hear O Catholic, hear the sublime characteristic, hear the distinguishing mark of your religion. Hear the sentence which enables you to say with the Apostle, *we have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who served the Tabernacle.* (Heb. xiii. 10.) Hear the sentence which gives you a visible minister to serve that altar, and to offer up that blood shed for the remission of sins. Hear the words which empower him to ask with confidence. *The Chalice of benediction whcih we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread whcih we*

break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? Hear it is the word of the Almighty, *Do this in commemoration of me.* What then should be your feelings when you kneel before your altar, where the death of your Lord is *shewn*, not by the senssless elements of bread and wine, but by the body and blood of that same Saviour apparently separated. You do not come depending on the proud yet feeble intercession of man, but on the mediation of him to whom the Lord swore his priesthood should be eternal. Here is the source of your exalted dignity, but why will you pervert it to your damnation? Why will you come into the presence of the living God with a soul defiled by sin? Why will you kneel before his altar with a heart inflamed with enmity against your brother, or burning with the desire of some forbidden pleasure, which you wait perhaps only to withdraw in order to indulge in? How will you answer to the Almighty for your conduct when you come into a church, and there, in a lazy listless manner, endeavour to kill an hour which you know not otherwise how to dispose of; or when you attend not perhaps so much for the sake of joining in the sublime, awful, and divine mysteries which are going forward, as of being amused by the discourse of a preacher, whom you hear but to ridicule or criticise. Oh scandalous Catholic, what shall be your sentence on the last day, when your lives are compared with that of him who has never known these mysteries, and whose ignorance is perhaps excusable, as being involuntary! You know you believe, you confess that the Almighty has offered himself as your spiritual food, and that on the worthy participation thereof depends your life, your salvation; and yet you refuse to approach, or you approach with such preparation as gives death rather than life, judgment rather than glory. You incur by your profanation the dreadful guilt mentioned by the Apostle. *Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* You commit a more heinous crime than the Jew himself who shed the blood of his Saviour. You are guilty both of his body and blood together; you approach the source of life, you take that which giveth life to the world, but to you it giveth death; and in eating you eat and drink judgment or damnation, not discerning the body of the Lord. Why not then prove yourself and come forward? If you would enjoy life you must seek it, not by abusing or flying from the source of life; death awaits you on either side,

nor can it be avoided but by a due preparation and worthy communion. The feast is prepared, the banquet Is ready, come and partake; but come with the wedding garment of innocence. Come with the unleaven of sincerity and truth. Come with your loins girt and staves in your hands, as persons prepared for a journey. Come with your minds disengaged from this earthly Egypt; with hearts resolved to traverse the desert of human life; with your passions confined by the zone of sanctifying grace, and with souls supported by the staff of an upright heart, which alone can preserve you erect in the presence of your Redeemer. Come thus prepared and partake of the pasch, the glorious pasch of the Christian; *for our pasch Christ is immolated.* You are still travellers in the desert; but behold here the spiritual manna, the living bread which came down from heaven, is offered for your support. You are exposed to the burning thirst of illicit desire; but come and drink of the spiritual rock which shall quench its ardor, for *the rock is Christ.* What dangers can intimidate you? What fears can cast you down? What difficulties shall you not be able to surmount? You live, you exist in him, and he in you who hath overthrown the powers of hell and darkness. You are most intimately, miraculously united with him. *As the living Father sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me.* Come forward then and eat, and live, and be strengthened. Will you be so mad as to refuse such a treasure?

To you, my brethren, to you the same offer is made, to you, to all the world who are willing to come forward with the due preparation. You, also your Saviour awaits in the abode of meekness and humility—to you his benevolent invitation is addressed, come to me all you that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Let not your senses recoil at the lowly state in which he is found, but view him through the light of faith by which alone he is visible. Follow, as wise men, this Guiding Star of your salvation, which shall conduct you to your Saviour. Prostrate yourself humbly before him, and offer to him the incense of adoration, and the myter of repentance. Be not surprised at his condescension or humility, but look to his whole life, and what shall you find but reiterated acts of this godlike virtue. Behold an infant in the stable, neglected by the world, denied a shelter in the abode of men, the manger his cradle, and the most contemptible of animals his companions. Be-

hold him in this lowly state, without pomp, without attendants, without necessaries—and confess him the creator of the world. Behold the most meek and humble of men—without abode, without dwelling, without a place to lay his head, a wanderer in the face of heaven, and the seeming out-cast of mankind. Behold him fatigued, faint, weary, resting on the naked rock, and begging a drink of water from a sinful woman, and confess him lord of the universe. Follow him yet through the further stages of his mortal career—behold him mocked, whipped, bruised, buffeted, by the vilest ruffians—behold him led publicly to execution, sinking under the load of an ignominious cross—behold him nailed to the fatal tree, with every humiliating circumstance of shame and ignominy—behold him suspended on the cross as a common malefactor, expiring in the company of thieves, amidst the scoffs of his tormentors—behold him in this deplorable state, giving up the ghost in the presence of thousands, and adore him as the God of heaven, the Sovereign of angels, the Lord of all things. Go one step further, renounce again the testimony of your senses, follow the light of faith, and confess him in the eucharist, believe, confess, and adore without prevarication, or figure, for he himself has said, *My flesh is meat truly, My blood is drink truly.* Confess and adore without fear of Idolatry or error, for he himself has said, *this is my body.* Yes, oh! my God, thou hast proposed to our faith a most stupendous mystery—thou hast proposed that which is infinitely above our comprehension. Thy goodness led to make that offering which we had never presumed to expect. Thou desirest in return, only a strong and firm faith, but for this thou thyself hast left us sufficient foundation—thy assurances have been great in proportion to the mystery, and the beam from heaven thou hast lent, would be sufficient to enlighten us on a subject, if possible, more difficult. How high soever it may be above our feeble reason, the light which thou hast given is still able to attain it. Aided by its divine effulgence, we escape the darkness of our understanding, and contemplate Thee as our God on the cross, in the stable, in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, and at the right hand of the Father in heaven. With justice can we say with the Psalmist, *Testimonia tua credibilia facta sunt nimis.* So strong are the assurances thou hast given us.

Yes, my brethren, the very nature of this sublime mystery—the very difficulty of our belief, the strong return of faith which it de-

mands, are but so many new proofs of one correctness, and of the impossibility of being mistaken. Never had man been able to persuade the world to adopt such a doctrine, unless aided by the Divinity. How could it happen that it should be universally received by the whole christian world in the 16th century? That Luther himself, who first started what is called the reformation, so far from denying, wrote a book in its defence. That at the present day the same doctrine is held, not only by the vast multitudes of Christians in communion with the Church of Rome, but by numbers without it; Greeks, Abysinians, and hundreds of others who acknowledge no supremacy belonging to that Church, still hold to the blessed Eucharist as firmly as the most rigid Catholic. How could it happen that one man, for were it the work of man it should have begun with one individual, it must have been devised in his own imagination, and then obtruded on others either as dupes or imposters; how I say could it happen, that this one man could persuade the world to adopt a belief so difficult in itself, so revolting in its nature, and so opposite to what they were taught before. Was it the work of a moment, or was it the labour of ages? Was it effected by his single exertions, or had he many assistants in his operation? Was he the dupe of his own imagination, or was he an imposter who knowingly misled others? What answer can we make to those numberless impossibilities? But what is still more strange, history is entirely silent with regard to such a personage. He has escaped the notice of every person who has written on civil or ecclesiastical affairs since the birth of Jesus Christ. Who he was, what he was, where he was born, where he died, or what opposition his tenets met with, nothing of these has been handed down to us. Yet that such a man actually did exist, that he invented a new doctrine, changed universally the face of the old, lived and died and was never heard of, such absurdities must be swallowed down, or the Catholic doctrine of the blessed Eucharist admitted. Whence then could it originate but from the Apostles; the true source from whom whatever is universal in religion must spring.

You may be told that this wonderful change was effected in the dark ages. This refuge to darkness is mighty convenient to the opponents of the Catholic Religion. When prest by any argument they fly to its shade, and shield themselves in its density from every attack. From thence too, they draw with wonderful ease ready so-

lutions for many difficulties which perplex their audience. This is the region of ghosts and spectres, which artifice conjures up to work upon the imaginations of the ignorant, and prevent them from exploring a territory so convenient for those who have seized it. There is their refuge from attack; there is the repository of their weapons; thence do they draw the materials which enable them to raise the edifice of popish absurdities. Thence do they import those figures which add new terrors to their building, like some enchanted castle of ancient legend, inhabited by Giants and goblins, into which whoever dared to enter was sure to meet with destruction; until the Theological Warrior comes forward, armed at all points with texts of Scripture, demolishes the building, destroys its inmates, and sets the neighbouring people free from the terrors of Popery and priestcraft.

But, my brethren, notwithstanding all the doubts which have been thrown in to thicken its density, and the obstacles raised to prevent our approach, if we only follow the light of history, we shall be able to penetrate the deepest darkness of the middle ages, and discover by its ray, objects a thousand times more minute than universal changes of religion. We shall discover the doctrine I propose to you, shining in unclouded splendour, and the first man that dared to doubt it, condemned by the voice of a general council. But without stopping in these dusky regions, the thought of which is sufficient to torture the imaginations of several, let us hasten on to the realms of light, the first ages of christianity, and then shall we find by comparison that this divine doctrine has come down to us, unclouded by a single shade of that darkness it has passed through; that it is the same to day as it was with the primitive christians, with the holy men that succeeded the apostles, and who preserved, unadulterated, the precious deposit of faith once delivered to the saints. Whence, then, my brethren, shall we derive a knowledge of this fact? Whence, but from the celebrated writers of the first ages. Let us then have recourse to their testimony, confining ourselves within that period in which the sun of christianity is said to have shown in meridian splendour, and avoiding that time in which darkness is said to commence. The end of the fifth century is stated as the point between light and darkness: let us hear the writers before that time: their authority is sufficient to determine the contest. Amongst the Fathers

of the fifth century, St. Augustin stands conspicuous. The writings of this great man are so filled with proofs of the Catholic doctrine of the blessed eucharist, that it is difficult to fix upon any particular passage. I shall give you one or two from a thousand others: Speaking of the Jews converted by St. Peter,he says, "They were converted, they were baptized, they approached to the table of the Lord; and now, believing they drank that blood which in their rage they had shed." (Serm. lxxvii. De Verb. Evang.) In another place he says, "You ought to understand what you have received, and what you are about to receive, and what you ought to receive every day. The bread which you behold on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That which the cup contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ; by these, the Lord was willing to set forth his body, and that blood which he shed for the remission of sins." (Serm. lxxxiii. In die Pasch. ad infantes.) "With believing heart and mouth,says he again, we receive the mediator of God and man, the man, Christ Jesus, who has given us his body to eat, and his blood to drink, although it may appear more horrible to eat the flesh of a man than to destroy it, to drink human blood, than to spill it." (Contra Advers. Legis.)

My brethren, what have I preached to you more explicit on this subject? But let us go back farther and examine a writer of an earlier date. St. Chrysostom, the great Bishop of Constantinople, who lived in the 4th century, is still equally clear. In one of his homilies he says, "The servants of Job to show their love of him, said, who will give us of his flesh, that we may be filled. In like manner, Christ gave us his flesh, that with it we may be filled, and inflamed with the love of him. This body, lying in the manger, the wise men reverenced, seeing no such thing as thou seest. Thou dost not see him in the manger, but on the altar; nor dost thou only see him, but moreover thou touchest him; nay, thou eatest him, and returnest home with him in thy breast. Cleanse thy soul from all defilement, and prepare thyself to receive these mysteries". (Hom. xxiv. in 1 Cor.) St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, a Father of the same century, delivers the same doctrine in terms equally explicit. Jesus Christ, in Cana of Galilee, once changed water into wine, by his will only; and shall we think it less worthy of credit, that he changed wine into blood. Invited to an earthly

marriage, he wrought this miracle ; and shall we hesitate to confess that he has given to his children his body to eat, and his blood to drink. Wherefore, in all confidence, let us take the body and blood of Christ. For, in the figure of bread, his body is given to thee ; and in the figure of wine his blood is given, that so being made partakers of the body and blood of Christ, you become one body and one blood with him. Thus the body and blood of Christ, being distributed in our members, we become Christopheroi, that is, we carry Christ with us ; and thus, as St. Peter says, we are made partakers of the divine nature. Catch.

My brethren, could human language deliver the Catholic doctrine in more express terms ? But let us not rest here ; let us approach nearer the time of the apostles ; let us examine the writings of those who immediately succeeded them. Justin, the martyr, who suffered in Rome about the year 166, in his Apology for the Christians, addressed to the emperor and senate, delivers not only the doctrine of the eucharist, but the very ceremonies of the mass, with very little change from what is practised at the present day. " Our prayers being finished," says he, " we embrace one another with the kiss of peace. Then to him who presides over the brethren, is presented bread and wine, tempered with water, having received which, he gives glory to the Father of all things in the name of the Son and Holy Ghost, and returns thanks in many prayers, that he has been deemed worthy of these gifts. These offices being performed, the whole assembly in acclamation answers, Amen ; when the ministers whom we call deacons, distribute to each one present, a portion of the blessed bread, and the wine and water. Some is also taken to the absent. This food we call the eucharist, of which they alone are allowed to partake who believe the doctrines taught by us, and who have been regenerated by water for the remission of sin, and who live as Christ ordained ; nor do we take these gifts as common bread, and common drink, but as Jesus Christ our Saviour made man, by the word of God, took flesh and blood for our salvation. In the same manner we have been taught, that the food which has been blessed by the prayer of the words which he spoke, and, and by which our flesh and blood in the change are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus incarnate. The apostles, in the commentaries written by them, which are called gospels, have delivered, that Jesus so commanded, when taking

bread, having given thanks, he said, *Do this in remembrance of me, this is my body.* In like manner, taking the cup, and giving thanks, he said, *This is my blood*, and he distributed both to them only. (Apol. prima.) Behold here, my brethren, the testimony of the immediate successor of the apostles, who wrote professedly in vindication of his fellow christian; yet, delivering the doctrine of the eucharist, and the manner of its consecration, as it is held and practised at this present day. In the same manner, said he, we have been taught, that the food which has been blessed by the prayer of the words which he spoke, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus Christ incarnate. By whom could he be taught, but by the apostles and their cotemporaries, who immediately preceded him? But let us hear even the cotemporary of the apostles themselves. Let us hear the great Ignatus, the disciple of St. John, the friend of Polycarp, and successor of Peter, in the see of Antioch. Hear how he speaks in his letter to the Smyrneans, over whom Polycarp, the angel of that church, presided. "These gnostic heretics abstain from the eucharist, and from prayer, because they do not acknowledge the eucharist to be the flesh of Jesus Christ, who suffered for our sins, and which the Father, by his goodness resuscitated. Rejecting, therefore, the gift of God, they die in this disputes."—(Ep. ad Smyrn.)

My brethren, with such testimonies before our eyes, can we suppose such a doctrine the offspring of darkness, or that it grew in the gloom of ignorance, like some earth-born excressence, which superstition received and cherished, and artifice brought to maturity. When we see it held taught, maintained, and sealed by the blood of the glorious martyrs of the first and second century, can we entertain a doubt of its origin; or, shall man attempt to stigmatize it as a monster, sprung from the womb of night, and ushered into day, by the agents of imposture and idolatry. Pardon me for speaking in this manner, on a subject so awful, and for uniting it in the same sentence with the rude calumnies of its infatuated opponents. Never should I have presumed to do so, but for your instruction, or to have drawn aside the veil of reverential silence, with which piety would have concealed it from the useless and impertinent gaze of curiosity; to expose its treasure only to the eye of wisdom, which alone could appreciate its value. But, my brethren, let us pause a moment, and ask ourselves, were these holy men guilty of idolatry?

Were the Justitians, the Austins, the Ignatius's, and those thousand others, those illustrious champions of the christian faith, were they nothing after all but the victims of illusion, or the dupes of imposture? Have their efforts to subvert paganism tended only to substitute a more gross, and more abominable idolatry in its place; or the calumny of the heathen, is it verified; have they displaced the idols of Jove or Mercury only to set up those of Ceres or Bacchus? What a horrible consequence! But what is still more so, the church of Christ is fallen into errror from its foundation, and the promise of the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of the Psalmist: *Semel juravi in sancto meo; si David mentiar: Semen ejus in etermem manebit. Et thronexs ejus sicut sol in conspectu meo, et sicut Luna perfecta in eternum, et testis in cœlo fidelis*, is utterly void and fallacious. Oh! dreadful blasphemy! yet there is no alternative. The doctrine of the Catholic church, with regard to the blessed eucharist, must be admitted, or those holy men reputed idolaters; the church of Christ, in error from its foundation, and the promise of the Almighty, vain and illusive. Can we hesitate then for a moment, which side to choose? Can we fear to be mistaken on this subject, whilst we have the concurrence of those illustrious Saints, when we have the express words of Jesus Christ himself. When we perceive the fallacy, the absurdity, nay, even the blasphemy of those sophisms, tending to invalidate their plain and literal meaning? When we have, in fine, every motive which man could require, to influence his reason, and make him submit it to the veracity of the Almighty, so that we can justly exclaim, if we are in error, Oh, my God, it is thou thyself hast deceived us.

Thus, my brethren, having laid before you, at a great, perhaps an unnecessary length, some of those proofs on which this sublime mystery of our faith is founded; I hope you will profit by the instruction, and receive with humble, yet firm faith, the precious gift proposed to your acceptance; that you will not suffer your senses to mislead your judgment, or say with the incredulous disciples, *this is a hard saying, who bean ear it*; that you will not suffer the sublimity of the doctrine to confound your reason, but look rather to the divine authority on which it rests, and thence borrow the pure light of faith, which shall aid the weakness of your understanding, and render all things easy. Were it a matter of indifference or opinion, I should never presume to trespass so long upon your time;

but whereas your eternal salvation is concerned, no time is misspent which is devoted to its attainment. Remember, it is not a naked, barren article that is proposed to your belief, but that the living bread is offered, whose effects shall not be deferred to the other side of the grave, but what shall immediately put its virtue in execution, and arm your souls with strength and resolution to meet manfully the trials of life, and walk triumphantly to the joys of heaven; that you shall be united to your Saviour in a most intimate and wonderful manner, and in this union shall experience a foretaste of that joy which the blest in heaven feel in his presence. That in it you shall find a balm for your afflictions, a cure for your ills, a remedy for your weakness, and a most potent curb to check and restrain the irregular sallies of passion and self-love.—

Do not expose yourself to perish in the desert of life, for want of this heavenly manna, or to faint with the ardour of passion, when the spiritual rock flows for your relief. Are you confounded at the condescension of your Saviour? But why should you be surprised at any excess of his goodness, when you reflect that he has heretofore suffered for you on the cross. Is it not he that says, My delight is to be with the sons of men. Is it not he that has said, We are branches of the vine, nourished by its juice, and supported by its essence. Shall you then refuse this divine support. Remember your case is vastly different from that of thousands to whom the word has never been preached. Whose ignorance is, perhaps, invincible, and therefore blameless in the sight of the Almighty. When called before the bar of eternal, undeviating Justice, to render an account of your works and words, shall you be able to say to the Almighty, I knew it not? Oh my brethren, how few are there who shall be able to offer such an apology. We see numbers who are quick sighted as the Lynx in every matter of worldly interest or advantage, but on the subject of faith or religion, are entirely blind and ignorant; nay, bury themselves like the mole in their own earthy pursuits, lest the light of heaven should break in upon them. How many come to hear a sermon or a moral discourse, without one thought of their souls or their salvation; with minds much less interested than they would be to hear a man speak on a point of law, or subject of an election. How many go there merely to amuse an idle hour, or to judge of the merits or defects of the preacher, without reflecting for a moment that God and heaven are at

stake, and that they are guilty of a profanation in subjecting such sacred things to the purpose of idle amusement! How many who come perhaps and hear with attention, and edified by what they hear, form resolutions of forming their future conduct by the rules of justice, mildness, and charity; yet on the sight of the slightest opposition, or some trivial worldly advantage, suffer their good resolutions to evaporate, and return again to their sins. Could it be expected that the Almighty would bestow on such persons the precious gift of faith, when they are every moment abusing the graces he has already lent them? No my brethren, it is not to be presumed. If you, O, man! would be brought to the true light, the light which would lead you to salvation, begin by making use of that feeble glimmer you already possess. Begin by divesting yourself of pride, by curbing the tongue of scandal, by restraining irregular desire, by endeavouring to acquire a thorough knowledge of your own weakness and insignificance, of the shortness of time, the length of eternity, the vanity of this life, the importance of the future, and above all by daily and fervently imploring the aid of the Almighty, to assist you by his grace, direct you by his council, and enlighten you by the true light which guides to salvation.

To him, therefore, as the last, the most important admonition, I refer you. I persuade myself that it cannot be applied to any one present, what our Lord applied to the incredulous disciples on the same subject. *There are some of you that behave not.* But, if unhappily, this should be the case with any, let them reflect on what our Lord has said: *Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to me, unless it be given him by the Father.* To the Father then let them have recourse by frequent and humble prayer; not by proxy, but personally; not in the words of man, but in the sublime prayer which our Lord has left us, let them address the Father, saying, Our Father who art in Heaven, &c. not only them, but all to beg for grace, and light, and strength, and happiness. And in your petitions to the throne of grace and heaven, forget not one another; forget not him who has given you the admonition; who, by the elevated state which he holds, is the more exposed to danger, and who, while he teaches others the sublime truths of religion. knows not but he himself may become a reprobate.

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